THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The following efforts are being made to reduce the dependence of agriculture on the vagaries of nature:—

(1) Developing varieties/hybrids of crops which can withstand the fluctuations in weather and climatic conditions and are of shorter duration.

(2) Advising farmers on the measures to be followed during different climatic/ weather conditions.

(b) Efforts are being made to promote mechanisation in selected field operations such as seed bed preparation, sowing/planting, spraying and dusting, harvesting, threshing and drying of crops for timely field operations. Micro-irrigation is also pursued to economise on water usage in crop raising.

(c) and (d) With a view to increasing the flow of credit and ensuring its timely availability to farmers, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has initiated the following measures—

(i) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has been requested to formulate a model credit card scheme for the farmers to enable them to secure production credit without difficulties.

(ii) NABARD has been requested to relax its norms relating to minimum recovery for sanction of credit limits.

(iii) Instructions have been issued to banks for the disposal of loan applications upto Rs. 26,000/- within a fortnight and those above Rs, 25,000/- within 8-9 weeks;

(iv) Appropriate sanctioning powers to rural Branch Managers have been delegated, so that majority of loan application from the weaker sections are sanctioned at Branch level;

(v) With a view to improving the access of small and marginal farmers to institutional credit, cooperative banks have been advised to earmark funds in favour of small, marginal and economically weaker farmers.

Handling of Natural Calamities

3999. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any detailed drill has been made by various Government agencies for handling natural calamities in view of the huge loss of human lives and property in the cyclones over the years;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and why it was not possible to save the human lives by timely evacuation to safer places in the recent Gujarat cyclone havoc; and

(c) whether it is attributable to system failure or an instance of inefficient management crisis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) India Meteorological Department (IMD) is the nodal agency for Cyclone warning in the country. According to the IMD, the Indian cyclone warning system is recognised as one of the best in the world. The genesis of tropical cyclones over Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal and their further movement and Development is monitored and tracked through Indian National Satellite (INSAT) and through Polar Orbiting US Satellities. When the cyclone is near the coast, it is monitored through cyclone Detection Radars. IMD have plans to replace some of the cyclone detection radars with latest State of Art Technology Doppler Radars in the 9th Plan period. Four High Wind Speed Recorders are in operation and twenty more are proposed to be installed during the 9th plan period. In the INSAT series, a new satellite, INSAT 2E is slated to be launched during this year. These new inputs are expected to further enhance their cyclone monitoring and forecasting capability.

In addition, INSAT Satellite based cyclone warning system which is known as Cyclone warning Dissemination System (CWDS) has also been developed through which the cyclone warnings are directly disseminated to the areas likely to affected by the cyclone. According to the IMD, Tropical cyclones, particularly those of very severe intensity are natural phenomena with extremely high potential for damage to property and loss of life and hence the heavy loss of life due to recent cyclone in Gujarat cannot be attributed to any system failure.

The State Government who are primarly responsible for initiating preparedness, and relief measures have formulated their action plans relief manuals which are updated from time to time keeping in view the experiences gained. State level and district level relief committees also exist to review and direct undertaking of various relief activities during the crisis period.

Agricultural Production

4000. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) What new measures have been initiated in the last three months to achieve quantum leap in agricultural production in the country;

(b) the new areas where cultivation is proposed to be started in next one year; and

(c) what new facilities are proposed to be provided to farmers during next year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) An Action Plan for Doubling of Food Production and making India Hunger Free in Ten Years under the National Agenda for Governance has been prepared by the Planning Commission. This Action Plan lays emphasis on sustainable use of basic resources such as land, water and fragile eco systems. A mission made approach for accelerating maize production is proposed to supplement the existing research component under the programme. Several measures covering credit, infrastructure development and supply of quality inputs are also on the anvil.

Small Land Holding Cultivation

4001. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any schemes under Governments' consideration to make small land holding cultivation profitable;

(b) if so, what measures are underway; and

(c) the results achieved by implementation of these measures, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) Diversification of crop production into more income generating allied activities covering horticulture, animal husbandry, dairying and pisciculture has been the thrust of developmental programmes pursued by the Government. It is proposed to supplement the above efforts by developing infrastructure including agro processing and marketing in feasible rural and Semi urban areas marginal farmers.

Integrated Piggery Development in Maharashtra

4002. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are assisting Maharashtra for Integrated Piggery Development in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof for the last three years; year-wise;

(c) whether the piggery development in the State is satisfactory; and

(d) if not, the remedial measures being taken in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) A Centrally sponsored scheme "Assistance to States for Integrated Piggery Development" is being implemented by this Ministry to provide 100% Grant-in-aid to assist piggery development in various states. The Ministry has not received any project proposal from the Government of Maharashtra for assistance under this scheme.

(c) and (d) As per the Livestock Census, the number of pigs in Maharashtra has increased between 1982—1992. However, piggery development, according to State Government has not taken a foot hold in the State. The State Government can avail assistance from the Central Government under the Central Government scheme of "Assistance to State for Integrated Piggery Development".

Control of Animal Diseases in Maharashtra

4003. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central funds are being made available to Maharashtra for the control of animal diseases in the State;